

INTERIM OPERATION OF NELAC/NELAP DURING TRANSITION PERIOD AUGUST 15, 2006 – JANUARY 2007

The National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) is in the process of transitioning into a self-sufficient and independent organization. Historically, NELAC and the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) have been directed by the United States, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) staff and funded by EPA. At the end of the annual NELAC meeting on August 15, 2006, the Director of NELAC/NELAP will resign from those duties. EPA has granted Cooperative Agreements to assist NELAC and NELAP in the process of becoming an independent, self-sufficient organization and to ensure the continuation of NELAP. The cooperative agreements were awarded to the National Forensic Science Technology Center (NFSTC) for administrative program assistance and establishment of a self-sufficient organization; the NSF International for standards development support; and the Institute of National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation (INELA) for standards development and technical support in areas such as database development. These cooperative agreements will remain in place for continued support of the NELAC/NELAP community thru 2008 for INELA and NSF International and thru 2010 for NFSTC. EPA will continue in their capacity as project manager for these cooperative agreements. EPA staff will be involved as equal partners and fellow members of the new organization.

The purpose of this plan is to ensure the continuation of NELAC and NELAP during this transition period. The transition period will begin at the end of the annual NELAC meeting on August 15, 2006 and it will end January 2007, when the new organization will start its operations. In order to accomplish these goals, the NELAC Board of Directors has outlined the following transition plan:

- **COMMUNICATION** – Updates of all activities and new organizational needs will be posted and advertised on the NELAC website (<http://www.epa.gov/nelac>) for all parties of interest to have an equal opportunity of participation. This website, however, will be inactivated at the conclusion of this transition period (i.e., on or before January 31, 2007) and replaced with one run by the new organization.
- **BOARDS/COMMITTEES** – All current board and committee members will remain in place given a new organizational structure will take over operation at the end of this six month transition period. Please watch the NELAC website for the new organizational opportunities and express interest in those areas in which you would like to become a member or participate further.
- **NELAC/NELAP DIRECTOR** – In the absence of having a NELAC or NELAP Director during this period of transition, those responsibilities will be handled as follows:

- NELAP programmatic duties will remain with Accrediting Authority Review Board (AARB), but they will report to the NELAC Board any findings/decisions made during this time.
 - The Proficiency Testing (PT) Board will be overseeing the Proficiency Testing Oversight Body (PTOB)/ Proficiency Testing Provider Accreditor (PTPA) with the NELAC Board retaining general oversight.
 - Administrative assistance will be provided via the cooperative agreement with the National Forensic Science and Technology Center (NFSTC).
- ACCREDITING AUTHORITIES – The NELAP Director made a request to the AARB to grant all Accrediting Authorities a one year extension to their current recognition in order to allow a smoother transition under the new organization. This request has already been granted and new certificates issued to each Accrediting Authority to reflect this action.